



Wetlands Leaf Rubbings!

One way to tell if you are in a wetland is to look at the plants. Certain plants are commonly found in wetlands because they are adapted to growing in wet conditions. Not only can you identify the plants to see if you are in a wetland, the plants can also tell you what kind of wetland you are in! For example, you can find a cypress tree in a swamp, but you won't find a cypress tree in a marsh because woody plants aren't adapted to grow in marshes.

A fun way to help remember what the leaves of different wetland plants look like is to make your own leaf rubbings. For this activity, find wetland plants in your area and then record the plants you find by making leaf rubbings.

What You Need:

- The Wetlands Leaf Guide or any wetlands plant ID guide
- Crayons
- Paper (copy paper or notebook paper)
- *Optional: gloves and a gardening pruner*

What To Do:

1. Either print out the Wetlands Leaf Guide, have it pulled up on your phone/tablet, or use another wetlands plant identification guide.
2. Take a nature walk to find wetlands plants. You may want to wear sturdy shoes like boots for your nature walk.



Some good indicators to look for when searching for wetlands areas are low-lying areas, cypress trees, and muddy areas surrounding lakes, rivers, streams, and bayous.

3. Each time you find a wetland plant, collect a leaf from that plant.
 - a. When you do this, make sure the area around the plant is safe and that there isn't poison ivy or wildlife around the plant.
4. Store the leaf somewhere where it won't get crumpled or damaged during your walk, such as an old shoe box or folded newspaper.
5. Continue to collect leaves from other wetlands plants.



6. Once you get back from your nature walk, it's time to make some leaf rubbings!
7. Grab a sheet of paper and place it over one of your leaves.
8. Then, use a crayon to draw on the paper over the leaf.
 - a. To keep the paper or leaf from moving around, you may want to use your fingers to hold the paper down over the leaf.
9. An outline of the leaf should appear on your piece of paper.
 - a. You may need to place the leaf upside down under the paper for it to work.
10. Continue doing this with each of the leaves you collected. You can use separate pieces of paper for each leaf or create a collage of leaves on one piece of paper.
 - a. You can also label each leaf rubbing with the name of its tree or plant.



11. You may notice that some leaves seem to work better for making leaf rubbings. Why do you think that is? Is there a pattern? Do leaves from a certain type of plant work better than leaves from other plant types?